

NEW PARKS EVALUATION CRITERIA

State Parks Act Stipulations

The State Parks Act states that the state parks system shall consist of representative examples of North Carolina's unique biological, geological, archeological, recreational, and scenic resources. New state park system units shall be added by an act of the General Assembly and shall address the needs described in the Systemwide Plan. All additions shall be accompanied by adequate appropriations for land acquisition, development, and operations.

Definitions

Park Unit: Any assemblage of land and/or water resources at one location that is classified as one of the following:

- Natural and scenic rivers, such as the New River in Ashe and Alleghany counties;
- State lakes, such as Lake Waccamaw in Columbus County;
- State natural areas, such as Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area in Carteret County;
- State recreation areas, such as Kerr Lake in Vance and Warren counties;
- State trails, such as the Lumber River Trail; and
- State parks, such as Hanging Rock State Park in Stokes County.

Operated Units: Operated units have one or more full-time staff, have visitor facilities; and are open to the public.

Managed Area: Any park unit that is not an operated unit.

Visitor Station: A facility or part of a facility that provides general park information and orientation materials, sanitary facilities, and resource interpretation materials for park visitors. A station may range in size and complexity from a small dedicated space within an office complex to a comprehensive visitor center with modules for office, auditorium, and exhibit space, toilet facilities, and a laboratory classroom. A standard center has approximately 5,000 square feet of heated space.

MINIMUM CRITERIA

1. **Statewide significance:** The proposed new unit contains a high quality example of a natural resource (biological, geological, archeological, recreational, or scenic) of statewide significance as defined by the Systemwide Plan. High quality determinations are made by the Natural Heritage and/or the Comprehensive Planning programs of the Division of Parks and Recreation.
2. **Size:**
 - Primary resource protection: The proposed addition must have sufficient acreage to protect the principle resources. Areas proposed as state parks or state recreation areas must have a minimum of 400 acres.
 - Facility development: The proposed addition must have sufficient acreage for appropriate facilities with minimum impacts to principle resources. Sufficiency is to be determined by the evaluation team. If the unit is to be operated for public use, it must be able to accommodate operation and maintenance facilities, an office, and a visitor station. For state parks and recreation areas, the site must be able to accommodate appropriate state park facilities such as campgrounds, picnic grounds, and trails and associated infrastructure.
3. **The site is relatively unspoiled and has only minor incompatible features:** The site does not contain incompatible features such as: roads that cannot be closed; intrusive development; significant threats to air or water quality that cannot be controlled; sources of excessive noise that cannot be controlled; and incompatible vistas. In some cases, these features can be separated by at least a 400-foot buffer.
4. **Public access:** If the park is to be operated for public use, access must be available. The site is free from limitations, such as zoning or deed restrictions, that would inhibit management of public use.

Note: A proposed site must meet all minimum criteria to be eligible for further consideration.

MEASURED CRITERIA

1. **Number of high priority expansion needs added to the state parks system:** The proposed site adds a high quality example(s) of a natural resource theme(s) that is identified as a priority expansion need(s) in the Systemwide Plan (see attached tables).

	Number of Themes	Multiplier	Score
• Priority One Themes	_____	x 10 =	_____
• Priority Two Themes	_____	x 7 =	_____
• Priority Three Themes	_____	x 4 =	_____
TOTAL (max. 372) _____			

2. **Rarity of theme:** The degree to which high quality examples of the natural resource theme(s) located on the proposed site exist at other locations.

	Number of Themes	Multiplier	Score
• Examples are Rare	_____	x 10 =	_____
• Some Examples Available	_____	x 7 =	_____
• Examples are Numerous	_____	x 4 =	_____
TOTAL (max. 450) _____			

3. **Threat to theme:** The degree to which high quality examples of the natural resource theme(s) located on the proposed site are threatened regionally.

	Number of Themes	Multiplier	Score
• Highly Threatened	_____	x 10 =	_____
• Moderately Threatened	_____	x 7 =	_____
• Low Degree of Threat	_____	x 4 =	_____
TOTAL (max. 450) _____			

4. **Degree of threat / urgency of acquisition:** Degree to which the integrity of the natural resources on the site are threatened.

- Highly Threatened (0–4.9 years) — 50 points _____
- Moderately Threatened (5–9.9 years) — 15 points _____
- Low Degree of Threat (10–19.9 years) — 5 points _____
- No Foreseeable Threat — 0 points _____

5. **Presence of rare and endangered species:**

	Number of Species	Multiplier	Score
• Federally Listed Endangered or Threatened	_____	x 10 =	_____
• State Listed Endangered or Threatened	_____	x 7 =	_____
• Federal or State Candidates, Special Concern, or Significantly Rare	_____	x 4 =	_____

TOTAL (max. 177) _____

6. **Interconnection with other protected areas:** The degree to which the proposed site is geographically linked or connected to other protected natural areas.

- Adjacent to a permanently protected significant natural area (e.g., national park, dedicated natural area, designated wilderness area, land conservancy preserve, etc.) — 50 points _____
 - Close proximity to a permanently protected significant natural area or connected by a habitat corridor _____
- OR
- adjacent to a multiple use conservation area (e.g., state or national forest, state game land, national wildlife refuge, selected military installations, etc.) — 20 points _____
 - Close proximity to a multiple use conservation area or connected by a habitat corridor — 10 points _____

7. **Presence of superlatives:** A superlative feature is one that is clearly unique or the biggest or the best example in the state of the a subtheme, whether biological, geological, scenic, or archeological/historic. The superlative feature is above and beyond mere representation in the system; so these points can be awarded even when the subtheme represented is already considered in the priority expansion needs as being adequately represented. For these points to be awarded, the site being evaluated must be big enough to protect the superlative nature of the feature. The feature(s) being judged as “superlative” must either (1) be present on the Natural Heritage list of such features, or (2) have its inclusion for this score accompanied by a clear statement of justification by the committee.

- One or more superlatives present — 100 points _____

8. **Demand for state park and recreation area units that are staffed and open to the public:** Highest priority for acquiring new recreation resources should be given to areas that will serve large populations that have access to limited state park acreage. An effective service area can be defined as counties within a 50-mile radius (see attached map).

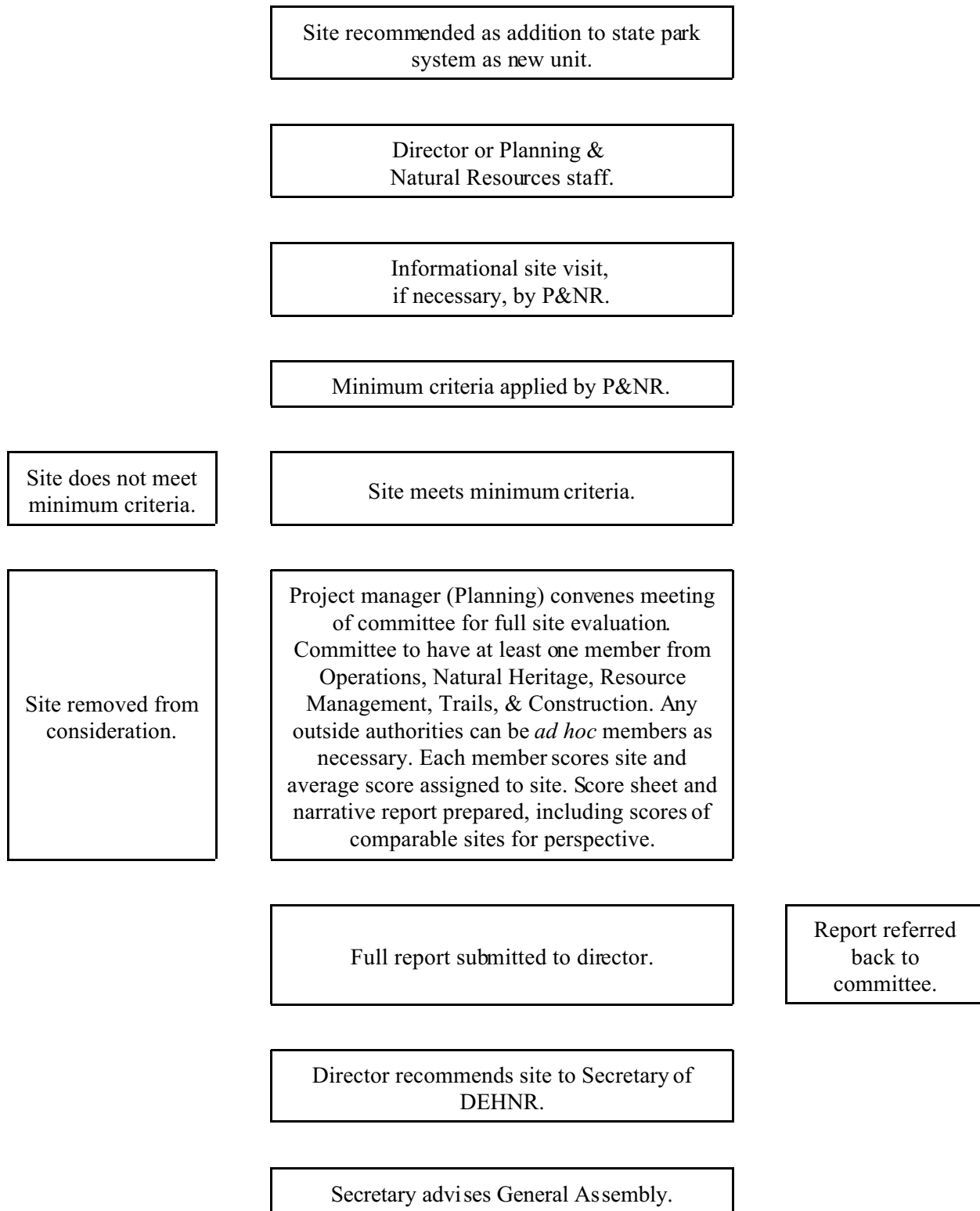
- Counties with 4 or less park acres/1000 population — 200 points _____
- Counties with 8 or less park acres/1000 population — 100 points _____
- Counties with 12 or less park acres/1000 population — 50 points _____
- Counties with 21 or less park acres/1000 population — 25 points _____
- Counties with more than 21 park acres/1000 population — 10 points _____

9. **Suitability for providing high quality recreation experiences:** The proposed site provides opportunities to develop facilities for activities that the public both desires and is willing to pay for.

- Total score from attached Recreation Suitability Score Sheet
(max. 315) _____

TOTAL SCORE FOR ALL CRITERIA (MAX. 2164) _____

EVALUATION FLOW CHART



RECREATION SUITABILITY SCORE SHEET

Site: _____ Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

ACTIVITY	FUTURE DEMAND	SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC FUNDING	POINTS AWARDED	SITE SUITABILITY MULTIPLIER*	SCORE
Fishing, Freshwater	High	High	10	x _____	
Camping, Tent or Vehicle	High	High	10	x _____	
Beach Activities	High	High	10	x _____	
Picnicking	High	High	10	x _____	
Attending Outdoor Cultural Events	High	High	10	x _____	
Visiting Natural Areas	Moderate	High	7	x _____	
Visiting Historic Sites	Moderate	High	7	x _____	
Bicycling for Pleasure	High	Moderate	5	x _____	
Trail Hiking	Moderate	Moderate	4	x _____	
Use of Open Areas	Moderate	Moderate	4	x _____	
Swimming (Lakes, Rivers, Oceans)	Moderate	Moderate	4	x _____	
Fishing, Saltwater	Moderate	Moderate	4	x _____	
Viewing Scenery	Moderate	Moderate	4	x _____	
Camping, Primitive	Low	Moderate	2.5	x _____	
Horseback Riding	Moderate	Low	1	x _____	
Power Boating	Low	Low	.5	x _____	
Nature Study	Low	Low	.5	x _____	
Canoeing/Kayaking	Low	Low	.5	x _____	
Water Skiing	Low	Low	.5	x _____	
Sailboating	Low	Low	.5	x _____	
TOTAL SITE SCORE:					

* A site suitability multiplier will be used based on the following:
 Potential for: large-scale activity use (3 points); moderate activity use (2 points);
 small-scale activity use (1 point); no activity use (0 points).

Adapted from the N.C. Outdoor Recreation Survey, 1989.

OVERALL SCORE SHEET

Site: _____ Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

CRITERION	MAXIMUM SCORE	SITE SCORE
1. High Priority Expansion Needs	372 ^{1.}	
2. Rarity of Theme	450 ^{2.}	
3. Threat to Theme Regionally	450 ^{2.}	
4. Threat to Site	50	
5. Rare/Endangered Species	177 ^{3.}	
6. Interconnection	50	
7. Superlatives	100	
8. Demand for State Park Units	200	
9. Recreation Suitability	285 ^{4.}	
TOTAL:	2,134	

1. Maximum score possible if all priority 1, 2, and 3 themes from the Mountain Region (45) are present.
2. Maximum score possible if all priority themes from the Mountain Region (45) are Rare or Highly Threatened.
3. Maximum score from database for Grandfather Mountain, considered to have highest number of special species.
4. Maximum score if opportunity exists for all recreational activities with large-scale use.